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April 2, 2003

Date

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THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of

DAVID MORRIS HAMILTON JR.

Serial No. 09/841,654

Filed April 24, 2001

PROCESS FOR CATALYTIC HYDROXYLATION
OF BENZENE

Group Art Unit: 1621

Examiner: Elvis O. Price

April 2, 2003

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

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RESPONSE

In response to the Office action of October 3, 2002 the following remarks are submitted. Reconsideration of this application in light of these remarks is respectfully requested.

REMARKS

The Examiner rejected claims 1-49 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,110,995 (Kharitonov et al.). The rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Applicants claim a process comprising:

continuously contacting, in a distillation column reactor comprising a reaction zone and a distillation zone, benzene with a zeolite catalyst effective to hydroxylate benzene and an oxidant at a temperature in the range of from above 100°C to 270°C thereby producing a hydroxylated product, wherein at least a portion of said benzene being in a liquid phase;

continuously separating said hydroxylated product from the un-reacted benzene in the distillation zone under conditions effective to vaporize said un-reacted benzene and maintain said hydroxylated product in a liquid phase;

and recovering the said hydroxylated product from the distillation column reactor.